Manpower

Military age 16–60 years old
Conscription Yes
Active personnel 22,834 (1630)
~77,000 (1700)
~150,000 (1721)
Reserve personnel 127,166 (1630)
Deployed personnel 150,000 (Thirty Years' War)
200,000 (Great Northern War)

Military of the Swedish Empire

Text Wikipedia / slideshow Anders Dernback

Leadership

King Gustav II Adolf (1611–1632)
Queen Kristina (1632–1654)
King Karl X Gustav (1654–1660)
King Karl XI (1660–1697)
King Karl XII (1697–1718)

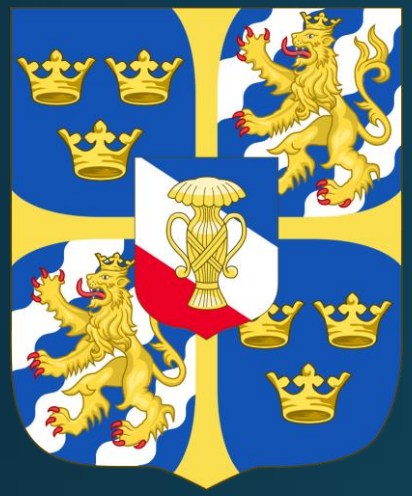
Field marshal

Johan Banér (1634-1641)
Carl Gustaf Wrangel(1646-1676)
Otto Wilhelm Königsmarck (1676–1685)
Rutger von Ascheberg (1678–1693)
Erik Dahlberg (1693-1702)
Carl Gustav Rehnskiöld (1706–1721)

Victory at Narva

The Battle of Narva Swedish: Slaget vid Narva) on 30 November [O.S. 19 November] 1700 (20 November in the Swedish transitional calendar) was an early battle in the Great Northern War. A Swedish relief army under Charles XII of Sweden defeated a Russian siege force three to four times its size. Before, Charles XII had forced Denmark–Norway to sign the Treaty of Travendal. Narva was not followed by further advances of the Swedish army into Russia; instead, Charles XII turned southward to expel August the Strong from Livonia and Poland-Lithuania. Tsar Peter the Great of Russia took Narva in a second battle in 1704.

Military of the Swedish Empire



From 1611 to 1721, Sweden was a European great power, becoming a **dominant faction** in the quest for control of the Baltic Sea and a formidable military power. During this period, known as Stormaktstiden (Swedish: "The Great Power Era"), the Swedish Empire held a territory more than twice the size of its modern borders and one of the most successful military forces at the time, proving itself on numerous occasions on battlefields such as Wallhof, Narva and Düna. The military of the Swedish empire is commonly (and wrongfully) recognized only as the Caroleans, which were in fact not in service until the late 17th century under Karl XI and his successor. The Swedish Empire and its modern military force was founded by **Gustavus Adolphus**, who inherited the throne in 1611 at age 17. He immediately **reformed the common European military based on mercenaries to a professional national army**. However, before completing his vision of conquering the Holy Roman Empire, the warrior king **was killed in action in 1632.**

Organization

Gustav II also so introduced a new regimental system, in which every province would be able to maintain one regiment of 3,264 men, divided in twelve companies of 272 men each. Four such regiments were to be active in mainland Sweden at all times (numbering 13,056 men), and another two regiments would be stationed in the eastern parts of the empire, giving Sweden a standing army of 19,584 men. Cavalry forces were organized in a similar fashion, with 13 companies (six Swedish, four Finnish and three noble), every company having 250 men and an equal number of horses (meaning that the Swedish army possessed 3,250 cavalrymen). While in military service, the provincial regiments were divided into field regiments of 1,176 men in eight companies of 147 men each – these including 21 officers, 54 pikemen and 72 musketeers. This system of field organization enabled small and mobile groups with high-quality leadership, excellent communication and unrivaled firepower. It is believed that the army of Gustav II Adolf was the first military to utilize effective combined arms tactics in renaissance history, and that the Swedish Empire was indeed the most successful fighting force of the Thirty Years' War.

A reenactor displaying a Swedish soldier in the army of Gustavus Adolphus, armed with musket, bardiche and rapier

Military of Gustav II Adolf

Upon inheriting the Swedish throne in 1612 , Gustav II Adolf (Gustavus Adolphus in Latin) also inherited three ongoing wars where Sweden was hopelessly outmatched by its wealthier neighbors. The young king saw the need of a strong military force if Sweden was to survive as a nation, and thus he began reforming the army with inspiration from the strategies used by Maurice of Nassau. To reach out to as many citizens as possible, Gustavus Adolphus gave the responsibility of conscription to the church, which would choose physically fit locals between the ages of 16 and 60. Not only did the church-based conscription enable a quicker and easier way to find able men of suitable age, but religious influence would strengthen the morale and unity of the Swedish troops compared to foreign mercenaries.

Equipment and tactics

The Swedish army at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War was equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry of domestic designs, including the leather cannon – a lightweight artillery piece that could fire at a fast rate and maneuver during the battle with only a handful of infantrymen (as opposed to the hostile artillery, which consisted almost entirely of enormous cannons that were very difficult to move even with horses). However, the cannon itself could quickly overheat and Gustavus had to rely on superior infantry and cavalry to defeat the Holy Roman Empire.

Equipment and tactics

The common "gallop cavalry" were armed with broadswords and also equipped with one flintlock carbine and two flintlock pistols. The infantry varied in equipment, with the musketeers being armed with a flintlock musket, a rapier sword and a shortened spear, glaive, or partisan that would not exceed 2 meters in length. Pikemen were commonly equipped with pikes of 4 to 6 meters in length and a rapier or broadsword for close defense. It was not uncommon for soldiers to also wield daggers and short-range pistols, but this was a voluntary addition to the common armament. Any infantry officer would be armed with a sword and at least one pistol, but officers often decided to wield the same kind of spear/glaive/partisan that their soldiers used, in order to keep enemies at a distance with greater effect than a sword would. During the Thirty Years' War, hand grenades were a rare sight on the battlefield, but Sweden did possess at least one specialized grenadier company.

The Navy

Denmark had always threatened Swedish naval dominance in the Baltic Sea, and even during the reign of a tactical genius such as Gustavus Adolphus, the Swedish navy remained somewhat inferior to their southern adversaries. The Vasa was built in a response to this, and was the most heavily armed warship of its time. But the Vasa did not pass its maiden voyage and sunk in 1628, leaving Sweden without its most powerful vessel and causing financial problems within the naval ministry. No expenses had been spared decorating the warship, and many tonnes of gold and bronze statues were now very difficult to salvage. Instead of relying on a naval power of his own, Gustavus sought to ally with the dominant Protestant naval powers in Europe (namely England and the Dutch Republic).

The Navy

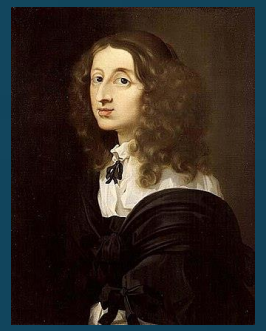
But a strong navy was not considered important by the king – it was on land that the battles against Catholicism would be fought and not in the small Baltic Sea. The concept of Dominium Maris Baltici was not a primary goal for Sweden during the Thirty Years' War, as it was overshadowed by the struggle to protect Protestantism. Nevertheless, Sweden did possess a quite powerful naval force compared to most adversaries other than Denmark – the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Holy Roman Empire both had inadequate naval forces to stop a Swedish landing of troops in northern Germany, and only Denmark was granted immunity against this.

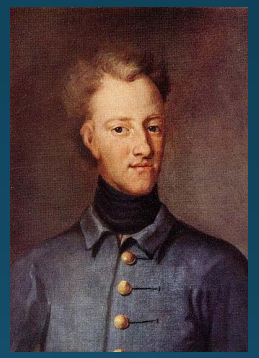
Leadership

King Gustav II Adolf (1611–1632)
Queen Kristina (1632–1654)
King Karl X Gustav (1654–1660)
King Karl XI (1660–1697)
King Karl XII (1697–1718)

Field marshal

Johan Banér (1634-1641)
Carl Gustaf Wrangel(1646-1676)
Otto Wilhelm Königsmarck (1676–1685)
Rutger von Ascheberg (1678–1693)
Erik Dahlberg (1693-1702)
Carl Gustav Rehnskiöld (1706–1721)





Manpower

Military age	16–60 years old
Conscription	Yes
Active personnel	22,834 (1630) ~77,000 (1700) ~150,000 (1721)
Reserve personnel	127,166 (1630)
Deployed personnel	150,000 (Thirty Years' War) 200,000 (Great Northern War)

Victory at Narva

The Battle of Narva Swedish: Slaget vid Narva) on 30 November [O.S. 19 November] 1700 (20 November in the Swedish transitional calendar) was an early battle in the Great Northern War. A Swedish relief army under Charles XII of Sweden defeated a Russian siege force three to four times its size. Before, Charles XII had forced Denmark–Norway to sign the Treaty of Travendal. Narva was not followed by further advances of the Swedish army into Russia; instead, Charles XII turned southward to expel August the Strong from Livonia and Poland-Lithuania. Tsar Peter the Great of Russia took Narva in a second battle in 1704.